
Electronic Planet: Is Your Business Disaster-Ready?

Is Your Business Disaster-Ready? Take steps now to protect your business in case the unexpected hits.

By Linda Bennett

Here in the Midwest, being ready for a disaster means being prepared for unpredictable, sometimes destructive weather. And, there are also disasters you can't blame on Mother Nature.

For most companies, if the phones are down, you're out of business. Your customers down the street know when a disaster strikes, so they understand why they can't reach you. But customers across town or across the country assume you're out of business if you don't answer when they call. Taking steps now while you can think calmly, instead of trying to decide what to do during a major crisis, can help protect your telecommunications and your business.

Battery Backup or a UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply)

Battery backup or UPS will keep your equipment running and keep you in business during a power outage. Be sure to protect all key components and choose the size that meets your requirement for estimated up-time. Be sure to change the batteries at least every three years.

Current Programming Backup

If your equipment sustains significant damage and a major component or the whole system must be replaced, current backup information will make the transition faster. It's important to keep a copy of your backup at a different location. Your equipment service provider may offer to store it for you.

Backup Generator

In rare instances when the power is out for days or weeks, a power generator can let you maintain full operations, or just the critical functions of your business. To decide if a generator is worth the investment, consider the potential losses to your business without it.

Remote Change of Greeting

The ability to remotely change the initial greeting on your voice mail system will let you tell customers what is happening even if you can't get to your office.

Remote Re-Route of Calls

Plan ahead for emergencies with the ability to reroute calls from your office to a different location without having to physically go to the office to activate the re-route.

Emergency Mailbox

An emergency mailbox on your voice mail system is a simple way to keep employees informed with the latest status of the emergency or directions on what to do. It's important to be able to change this message from a remote location.

Keep Technology Current

If your system gets hit with major damage that requires the replacement of critical components, old hardware and software versions may not be available, making emergency repairs difficult and expensive. Current technology versions should be readily available so repairs can be made sooner and possibly more cost effectively.

Service Partner

Don't wait until disaster strikes to try to find a good company to service your telecom system. Good companies will probably be taking care of their good customers. A telecommunications company that is familiar with your business and your equipment will be better prepared to provide service in a crisis. A pre-paid maintenance plan may be the best option.

It's important to expect the best, but it's also smart to be prepared by taking precautions to protect your business.

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